

Marian's Story

Heart disease runs on both sides of my family. My grandfather died at age 43, my father died suddenly at 63, his mother died at 63 and his father died at 72 - all from heart attacks. Several of my uncles have died in their 40s and 50s from heart attacks.

I'm the oldest of 10 children and nearly all of my brothers and sisters have had heart attacks. My brother had his first heart attack at 42 and died at 48. My other brother died at 56, and the other one had a mild heart attack but made it through his 40s. I have six sisters and only one of them is in good health because she exercises and watches her diet.

I'm lucky. I'm 67 and haven't had a heart attack yet. But I have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes. I've been on medications for years. I am so aware of my family history and because of that I walk and try to eat right. Everything is under control because of my walking and diet, but it isn't easy to always make healthy choices.

Knowing your family history could help save your life. Some of my family members think this is how my family is and there's nothing we can do about it. But you can! If my family had known what signs to look for, they could have changed their lifestyles. I am so aware of our family's health issues and am constantly talking to my nine children and 30 grandchildren about the importance of exercising and eating healthy. I try to be a good example and share what I know about our family health history so future generations won't have to worry about repeating the same fate.



Tell us your story by visiting www.health.utah.gov/genomics.